

CHAPTER 5

INFINITIVE, GERUND, AND PARTICIPLE

☺ General characteristics

Both the gerund and the infinitive can function as nouns standing alone, or they can function as verbs in non-finite noun clauses.

1. The gerund and the infinitive can function as nouns, the gerund being more easily identifiable with a noun.

a) The gerund may stand alone as the subject of a verb:

***Reading** is his favourite pastime.*

The infinitive is not often used in this way.

b) Both the gerund and the infinitive may stand alone as the object of a verb:

*I have finished **working**.*

*I want **to leave**.*

c) Both may function as the complement of *to be*:

*My worst vice is **peeping** through the keyhole.*

*Her { first thought was **to kill** him.*

d) Only the gerund can be used as the object of a preposition:

*He { insisted on **coming**.*

Only { the gerund may be qualified by adjectives:

*{ This horse saddle makes easy **riding**.*

Only the gerund can be used with an article and can have a plural form:

*All the newspapers have now published the **findings** of the police.*

*I am not accustomed to his **comings** and **goings**.*

2. The gerund and the infinitive can operate as verbs in non-finite noun clauses.

a) They may be followed by a direct or indirect object:

*Closing the factory means **laying off** more people than expected. (Direct object)*

*He hates **speaking** to his former friends. (Indirect object)*

b) They may be qualified by adverbs:

*A teacher of English should avoid **speaking** too quickly.*

*He wants **to leave** immediately.*

c) They have perfect and passive forms:

□ Perfect: *The clerk was accused of having cooked the books.*

He pretended to have misunderstood the request.

□ Passive: *No one likes being thought a fool.*

She doesn't want to be told about the accident

□ Perfect *He resented having been told to drop dead.*

passive: *He claimed **to have been stolen** at the Customs.*

3. In some of the above examples a *that*-clause could be used after the main verb in place of the gerund or the infinitive:

- a. Closing the factory means - laying off people.
- that people will lose their jobs.
- b. He pretended - to have misunderstood the request.
- that he had misunderstood the request.

One of the main problems is that of learning which form, *-ing* form, infinitive or *that*-clause, should be used after another verb. One can learn to associate a verb with its particular pattern only through practice. Verbs that are similar in meaning do not necessarily follow the same pattern:

*I advised him **to start** in the morning.*

*I suggested that he **(should) start** in the morning.*

☺ The Infinitive

Forms of the infinitive:

	Active	Passive
Present infinitive	<i>(to) ask</i>	<i>(to) be asked</i>
Present progressive infinitive	<i>(to) be asking</i>	–
Perfect (past) infinitive	<i>(to) have asked</i>	<i>(to) have been asked</i>
Perfect (past) progressive infinitive	<i>(to) have been asked</i>	–

The short infinitive

1. The short infinitive is mainly used after modal verbs (except *ought*), including *need* and *dare* when they are modals.

*I can/could/must [...] **study** harder.*

2. *Let* + infinitive. We use the imperative form *Let's* as an auxiliary verb followed by a short infinitive when making suggestions for actions that include the speaker. *Let's* is often associated with *shall we*?

Let's have a drink, shall we?

The negative of *Let's* in suggestions is:

***Let's not/Don't let's* walk home.**

Informally, *Let's* can relate to *I* in offers and requests:

***Let's see* what you've got here. *Let's have* a look. ('Can I?')**

Let as an auxiliary can be followed by other pronouns or even nouns:

***Let the children/them play* in the garden.**

3. *Make* ('compel') + short infinitive. *Make* + noun/pronoun object can be followed by a short infinitive meaning 'cause to':

*He made his students **learn** harder through new methods of teaching.*

*The cut of your suit makes you **look** slimmer.*

In the passive *make* in this sense is followed by *to*:

*They were made **to tell** the truth.*

Make with the meaning of 'compel' can never be followed by a passive infinitive. Otherwise it can:

*Rules were made (created) **to be broken** by the most powerful.*

4. The short infinitive occurs in a number of fixed verbal phrases with *let* and *make*: *let fall, let go, let me see, let slip, live and let live, make believe, make do*.

5. We use the short infinitive after expressions in which 'd can be replaced by *would* or *had*:

a. 'd = would: 'd rather, 'd sooner;

*I'd rather **stay** at home than **go** out.*

b. 'd = had; 'd better, 'd best (less common):

*We'd better/best **be going**.*

Informally *better* or subject + *better* often occur without *had*:

*You better **stop** arguing and **get down to** work.*

The infinitive with or without *to*

1. *Help* + short infinitive. We may use both infinitives after a few verbs like *help* and *know*. The use of a *to*-infinitive is more formal:

*He helped me **(to) repair** my car.*

We do not usually omit *to* after *not*:

*How can a teacher help student **not to fail** the exams?*

In the passive *to* is obligatory after *help*:

*She was helped **to solve** the problem in half the time.* *Help* + passive infinitive is possible, though rare:

*The chemist was sure that drug will help him **to be cured**.*

2. *Know* + infinitive normally requires a noun or pronoun object. The omission of *to* is only possible with the perfect form of *know*:

*I've never known her not **(to) be frightened** of something.* In the passive *to* is obligatory:

She was known to have published two collections of poems.

Infinitives can be joined by *and*, *but*, *except*, *or* and *than*. *To* is usually dropped before the second infinitive:

*I'd like **to go** and **see** the new exhibition.*

The short infinitive and -ing forms after verbs of perception

1. Verbs like *hear*, *smell* and *watch* without a noun or pronoun object followed by an -ing form show that the action is perceived in a general way, the -ing form functioning as the object of the verb:

*We could **hear screaming** in the haunted house.*

2. Some verbs like *feel*, *hear*, *listen to*, *look at*, *notice*, *observe*, *perceive*, *see*, *smell*, *watch*, can be followed by a noun or pronoun object + short infinitive or -ing forms. The infinitive generally shows a complete action, while the -ing form refers to the action in progress:

*I saw him **cross** the street* (from one side to the other).

*I saw him **crossing** the street* (he was doing that when I looked, but I do not know if he got to the other side). Both verbal forms can describe a short action:

*I heard him **knock/knocking** on the door.*

We do not usually use -ing forms for very short actions:

*I heard him **sneeze**.*

The passive -ing form, but not the passive infinitive can follow a verb of perception:

*I saw him **being taken** away by the flood.*

3. The verbs *hear*, *observe*, *perceive* and *see* are often used in the passive followed by -ing forms or by a to-infinitive:

*They were seen **waiting** in the queue* (action in progress).

*They were seen **to climb** through the window.*

Have + short infinitive or -ing form

1. *Have* + personal object + short infinitive shows that one person is causing another to do something:

***Have** the next client **come in**, please!*

*He wanted a job to do, so I **had** him **chop** the wood.*

2. *Have* + object + -ing form is used to refer to the results we are aiming at:

*I'll **have** you **winning** the championship.*

We can also refer to consequences, which may not be intended:

*Don't scream or you'll **have** the neighbours **complaining**.*

When we use this construction with *won't* or *can't* we refer to circumstances we are not willing to approve of:

*I **won't/can't have** you **speaking** like that about my fiancée.*

Sometimes this construction refers to happenings which the speaker cannot control:

*We **have** strong winds and heavy rain **devastating** the region once in fifteen years.*

The to-infinitive

1. *To/in order to/so as to* express purpose:

*She went to Harrods **to buy** a new dress.*

Not to can be used to refer to alternatives:

*She went to Harrods **not to buy** a dress but **to meet** Tom.* We express negative purpose with *so as not to/in order not to*:

*I shut the window **so as not to hear** the noise from the street.*

When there is a change of subject we may use *for... + infinitive*:

*He bought another car **(in order) for his son to learn** to drive.*

Other verbs such as *bring, buy, need, take, use, want* often introduce an object + *to*-infinitive, which tells us about the purpose of the object, usually an indefinite pronoun:

*I'd like something **to cheer** me up.*

Other verbs, such as *apply, arrange, ask, call, plan, plead, phone, pray, ring, send, vote, wait, wish*, can be followed by *for + object + to*-infinitive. *For* marks the subject of the infinitive:

*How long have you been waiting for Tom **to confess** his guilt?*

2. Sometimes the *to*-infinitive in the second part of a sentence is used for the later event in a sequence. The *to*-infinitive, sometimes replaced by *and + verb*, describes an event which is unexpected, or unwelcome – especially when *only* is used in front of *to*:

*We came home after our holiday **(only) to find** our house broken into and all the jewels stolen.*

A similar construction occurs with *never*:

*She left home **never to return/never to be seen** again.*

3. The *to*-infinitive is used to refer to the future or to an imaginary past with verbs like: *hope, intend, mean, (would) like to*. A perfect infinitive is often used after a past verb, but it is not always necessary:

*I would like **to see** that play (now, or in the future).*

*I would like **to have seen** it (in the past).*

*I would have liked **to see** it (but I didn't have a chance).*

*I would have liked **to have seen** it.*

Contrastive negatives

We form the negative of a *to*-infinitive by putting *not* before *to* (in AmE it is placed after *to*):

*He soon learnt **not to speak** rudely to anybody.*

With many verbs such as, *advise, ask, instruct, remind, tell, warn*, the placing of the negative influences the meaning:

*Don't ask Tom **to telephone**, I'll ring him myself.*

*Ask Tom **not to telephone**, I don't want to be disturbed.* The placing of the negative has a similar effect on meaning with adjectives and nouns + infinitive:

*I wasn't sorry **to go** ('I went').*

*I was sorry **not to go** ('I didn't go').*

*It wasn't a surprise **to hear** from Susan ('I heard from her').*

*It was a surprise **not to hear** from Susan (I didn't hear from her).*

Negatives are sometimes possible in both parts of the sentence:

*I **can't** promise **not to be** late, but this would be expressed more simply:*

*I **can't** promise **to be** on time.*

The split infinitive

To split an infinitive means to place an adverb or *please* between *to* and the verb. This is not a usual procedure in written English but it is met in spoken language, depending on the place of the emphasis.

*He wanted me **to clearly understand** the rules of the game.*

Adverbs like *completely, fully, really, truly* are often used in this way and sometimes there is no other suitable place for them:

*The church wants its believers **to truly confess** their sins.*

Verbs followed by infinitive

Some verbs followed by *to*-infinitive are *aim, apply, decline, fail, hasten, hesitate, hurry, long, manage, offer, prepare, refuse, seek, shudder, strive, struggle, can't afford*.

Some verbs can be used with or without a noun or pronoun before a *to*-infinitive: *ask, beg, choose, expect, hate, help, intend, like, love, need, prefer, prepare, promise, want, wish*:

*I want **to read** the letter*

compared to

*I want you **to read** the letter.*

Some verbs are normally followed by a pronoun or noun when used with a *to*-infinitive: *advise, allow, assist, bribe, cause, caution, challenge, charge, command, compel, condemn, dare* (meaning 'challenge'), *defy, direct, drive* (meaning 'compel'), *enable, encourage, entitle, forbid, force, impel, implore, incite, induce, instruct, invite, oblige, order, permit, persuade, press* (meaning 'urge'), *recommend, remind, request, teach, tell, tempt, urge, warn*.

*The judge ordered him **to bring** in the prisoner.*

Some verbs can be followed by an object + *to be* and by a few state verbs like: *acknowledge, assume, believe, calculate, consider, declare, discover, estimate, fancy, feel, find, guess, judge, know, maintain, proclaim, prove, reckon, see, show, suppose, take*, (meaning 'presume'), *think, understand*.

*The authorities declared him (**to be**) 'persona non grata'.*

*Agatha is thought **to have spread** the rumour in town.*

*Tom is believed **to be going** to Australia for the Olympic Games this year.*

These verbs are very frequently used in the passive and can be followed by passive infinitive:

*The goods are thought **to have been delivered** on time.*

A few verbs like *believe, expect, intend, like, love, mean, prefer, understand, want, wish*, can be followed by *there to be*:

*The Prime Minister expects **there to be** street riots after the tax raise.*

Many verbs can be followed directly by a *to*-infinitive or a *that*-clause: *agree, arrange, beg, (not) care, choose, claim, contrive, decide, demand, determine, expect, hope, intend, learn, plan, prefer, pretend, promise, resolve, swear, threaten, wish*.

*I chose **to go** there in my own car/that I would go in my own car.*

Most of these verbs imply future time so that they are not usually followed by the perfect infinitive. Nevertheless, verbs that refer to intentions or hopes can be followed by a perfect infinitive together with the future perfect:

*He hoped **to have finished** by Christmas.*

Patterns with adjectives followed by infinitive

1. *She was kind **to let** us know the good news.*

This pattern is used when we are praising or criticising people. The subject of the main verb and of the infinitive is the same and sometimes an adverb expresses the same idea:

She very kindly told us what we were expected to do.

Some adjectives used in this way are: *brave, careless* (not careful), *clever, foolish, generous, good, (un)kind, polite, right, wrong, rude, (un)selfish, silly, wicked*.

2. *He is eager **to please**.*

The subject of the main verb, *be, feel, look* and the subject of the infinitive are the same. The use of this pattern implies the speaker's concern for the people's feeling about an action or situation, *I/we* fitting naturally. There is no alternative structure with *It*. Some adjectives used in this pattern are: *afraid, anxious, ashamed, careful* (not careless), *curious, determined, due, eager, fit, free, frightened, glad, keen, prepared, quick, ready, reluctant, slow, sorry, willing*.

*My friend is always prepared **to take** the bull by the horns.*

For + noun/pronoun can be used after a very limited number of adjectives, such as *anxious, determined, eager* and *keen*, referring to situations that have not yet occurred:

*He's anxious for his son **to pass** the entrance exam.*

A few adjectives referring to possibility or probability can be included here: *bound/certain to, (un)likely to, sure to*.

*He is bound, certain/likely/sure **to win** the first prize.*

It can be used as a preparatory or empty subject:

*It's bound/sure **to rain** on our trip to the mountains.*

3. *He is easy **to please**.*

The infinitive in this pattern usually refers to things done to someone or something. The subject of this pattern is also the subject of the infinitive. The *It* structure is often used:

*It is easy **to please** him.*

Some adjectives used in this pattern are *agreeable, amusing, boring, difficult, easy, hard, impossible, nice* and others.

4. *It is good **to be** here with you.*

We can find many adjectives that fit in this pattern. The infinitive subject is usually replaced by *It*.

***To accept** their job is out of the question.*

*It is out of the question **to accept** their job.*

For + noun/pronoun can occur after many of these adjectives:

*It won't be easy for him **to find** the perfect wife.*

Some of the adjectives ask for an *-ing* form after them:

*It is hard **lecturing** in front of so many students.*

A number of adjectives used in this way (e. g. *advisable, important, necessary, vital*) refer to advice, necessity, duty and can be followed by *that ...should*:

*It is important **to find** the solution to this problem/that we should find...*

5. *He is the first **to arrive**.*

We can use *the first, the second, etc, the next, the last*, and superlative like *the best, the most suitable* in this pattern.

Adjectives patterns with 'too' and 'enough'

Too comes before the adjective and has the meaning of 'excessive' or of restriction:

He isn't clever; he believes everything he's told.

*He is **too stupid** to think by himself.*

Here the subject of the main verb is also the subject of the infinitive. In other circumstances the subject of the main verb is the object of the infinitive:

The problem is too difficult. I can't solve it.

*The problem is **too difficult** (for me) to solve.*

Generally *-ed* adjectives have a personal subject + *too* and *-ing* adjectives have an impersonal subject + *too*:

*I'm **too bored** to listen to your silly jokes.*

*The race was **too** exciting to watch.*

Enough comes after the adjective and means 'to the necessary degree'. In patterns with *to*-infinitive it expresses two ideas:

*He is clever. He can solve the ~~problem~~. He is clever **enough** to solve the problem.*

*He is stupid. He can't solve the ~~problem~~. He isn't clever **enough** to solve it.*

We have the situation when the subject of the main verb is the object of the infinitive, too:

*The exercise is easy. I can do it. It is easy **enough** (for me) to do.*

For + noun/pronoun can combine with too much/little, not enough:

*There is **too little work/not enough** work for me to do.*

Nouns followed by *to*-infinitive

1. In this case the infinitive is related to verbs.

a) Some nouns are usually associated with the infinitive:

*Their decision **to go** to the capital frightened the President.*

*They decided **to go** to the capital and this frightened the President.*

A noun may have the same form as a verb or a different form:

*They wish **to buy** a new house.*

*It's their wish **to buy** a new one.*

*Her bank manager refused **to give** her a loan.*

*His refusal **to give** her a loan took her by surprise.*

b) Some nouns are followed by a preposition + *-ing* form.

He can't hope to make friends with her.

*There's no hope **of making** friends with her.*

Some nouns can be followed by an infinitive or by a preposition:

*It's a pleasure **to study** English.*

*There is nothing better than the pleasure **of studying** English.*

c) Some nouns combine with other infinitive forms: *a surprise to be/to have been; a change to be sitting/lying on the beach*, etc.

2. There are instances where the *to*-infinitive is related to the nouns it follows. Many of these adjectives have equivalent nouns (usually having different forms). But not all these nouns can be followed by *to*-infinitives:

*She's determined/eager/willing **to accept** the offer.*

*Due to her determination/eagerness/willingness **to accept** the offer we can finish the job.*

But we have noun + preposition + *-ing* form:

*It was generous/kind (of you) **to lend** us the money we need.*

*Thank you for your generosity/kindness **in lending** us the money.*

3. The *to*-infinitive is often used after a noun to convey advice, purpose etc. This construction has the role of a relative clause:

*The best person **to help** you is your father (that can help you).*

Sometimes active and passive infinitives are interchangeable:

*There is something **to do/to be done** about that matter.* When the subject is the same for the sentence and the infinitive we do not normally use the passive:

*He has homework **to do**.*

4. The *to*-infinitive can be used after words used in place of nouns, such as *something, someone, a lot*:

*There was a lot **to read/to be read** for the exam,*

or they can have different meanings:

*There was nothing **to do** in the evenings so we watched TV (we were bored).*

*He's already in prison. There is nothing **to be done** about his bail (we can't change it).*

5. We also have the constructions *so...as to* and *such a/an...as to*:

*I'm not so stupid as **to tell** you where the money is.*

*I'm not such a fool as **to tell** you where the money is.*

We use the *to*-infinitive after a noun preceded by an adjective in exclamations, sometimes the adjective being omitted when criticising:

*What a rude thing **to say**.*

•The *-ing* form

1. After verbs. Verbs like *enjoy*, *deny* can be followed directly by the *-ing* form:

- Active: *He denies **coming** here in his own car.*
- Passive: *They resented **being accused**.*
- Active: *He denied **having come** here in his own car.*
- Passive: *They resented **having been accused**.*

When we want to use another verb immediately after the verbs in the following list, it can only be in an *-ing* form, never a *to*-infinitive: *admit, appreciate, avoid, celebrate, consider, contemplate, defer, delay, deny, detest, discontinue, dislike, dispute, endure, enjoy, it entails, escape, excuse, explain, fancy, feel, like, finish, forgive, can't help, hinder, imagine, it involves, keep, loathe, it means, mention, mind ('object to'), miss, it necessitates, pardon, postpone, practice, prevent, recall, report, resent, resist, risk, suggest, understand:*

*The convicts escaped **being** caught.*

Deny and regret are often followed by perfect participle:

*Children usually deny **having done** anything wrong.*

The *-ing* form relating to outdoor activities, such as *climbing, driving, fishing, riding, sailing, shopping, skiing, walking, water-skiing, wind-surfing*, is often used after *go* and *come* when we are

a) making suggestions:

*Why don't we go **fishing** on such a lovely day?*

b) inviting:

*Come **shopping** this afternoon if you feel like.*

c) narrating:

*Last week we went **sightseeing** in Edinburgh.*

The *-ing* form can follow *need, want* and seldom *require* having a passive meaning:

*She needs **cheering up** (to be cheered up).*

With some of the verbs which can be followed by an *-ing* form, we can put another word between the verb and the *-ing* form. Sometimes this word must be an accusative, sometimes a possessive or either. After the following verbs the *-ing* form functions as a participle and we can include an accusative: *hear, keep, smell, start, stop, watch*.

*When are you going to start **working**?*

*When are you going to start him **working**?*

The following verbs must always have an accusative: *catch, find, leave, notice, observe, perceive, see*.

*I saw him **pickpocketing** in the station.*

Verbs of perception (*hear, see*) can also be followed by an object + short infinitive:

*He saw his wife **get** on the train with another man.*

The following verbs can be followed by the *-ing* form alone or by a possessive. Here the *-ing* form functions as a gerund, so we can use a possessive form, referring to people and to things, in front of: *appreciate, avoid, consider, defer, delay, deny, enjoy, postpone, risk, suggest*.

*I don't enjoy their **coming** late to the office.*

Some verbs can be followed by *-ing* alone or by an accusative or a possessive before *-ing*: *anticipate, contemplate, detest, dislike, dispute, endure, escape, excuse, (can't) face, fancy, forgive, hate, hinder, imagine, it involves, like, love, mention, mind ('object to'), miss, it necessitates, pardon, prevent, resent, resist, understand, can't bear, can't help, can't stand*. In speech the accusative is generally preferred:

*I can't imagine him/his **climbing** the Everest.*

2. After adjectives and nouns. Like the *to*-infinitive, the *-ing* form can be used as the subject of a sentence and can be replaced by a construction with 'preparatory' *it*. There is not much difference in meaning between *-ing* and the *to*-infinitive. The *-ing* form may refer to an action in progress, while the *to*-infinitive may refer to general:

*It's difficult **thinking** in a foreign language.*

*It's difficult **to think** in a foreign language.*

We rarely begin statements with *to*-infinitive but often begin with *-ing* forms, especially when we make general statements:

***Travelling** around the world is interesting.*

Adjectives can be followed by the accusative or the possessive:

*It's strange him/his **talking** so loudly.*

When the *-ing* form begins a sentence it is normally preceded only by a possessive:

*His **working** on the computer all day long gets on his family's nerves.*

Many nouns, both countable and uncountable, can be followed by the *-ing* form after 'preparatory' *it*, e.g.: *a catastrophe, a disaster, fun, hell, luck, a mistake, a pain, a pleasure, a relief, a tragedy*.

*It's a nightmare **going** in his old car.*

Typical expressions that can be followed by the *-ing* form are: *it's no good, it's no use, it's little use, it's hardly any use, it's not worth, it's scarcely/hardly worth, it's worthwhile, spend money/time, there's no, there's no point in, there's nothing worse than, what's the use/point*.

3. After prepositions. Prepositions can be followed by all *-ing* forms, active and passive, e. g.: *without **signing** your real name; without **being called**; without **having been warned***. We may use the *-ing* form after prepositions such as: *about, after, by, for, instead of, to, without*:

*Why shouldn't we try to leave the restaurant without **paying**?*

Prepositions can also be followed by an accusative pronoun, noun, or possessive:

*He would come without **our inviting** him.*

There is/There will be and *it is/it will be* can be replaced by *there being* and *it being* after prepositions. *There being* can often be omitted:

Is there any chance of (there being) an increase in salary this year?

Many adjectives can be followed by prepositions like *afraid of, bored with, fond of, good at, happy about, interested in, keen on, sorry for, used to*. The *-ing* form (not a *to*-infinitive) may be used after them:

*He was surprised at **their not calling** at all.*

The *-ing* form may be used after noun + preposition such as *concern about, fear of, interest in*:

*Sue could never overcome her fear of **being** robbed.* Accusative and possessive forms can also be used.

*Your main concern must be about his **passing** his exams.* Many verbs are followed by prepositions: *apologise for, approve of, insist on, prevent somebody/something from, thank somebody for*. The *-ing* form may be used after a verb + preposition and may be preceded by an object or a possessive:

*I must insist on **you/your coming** on time.*

To is either a preposition or a part of the infinitive. It is part of the infinitive in:

*He wants **to become** a doctor,*

but a preposition governing a noun/gerund in,

*I object **to** intruders.*

*I object **to** smoking indoors.*

In the following expressions *to* is a preposition, so we may use the *-ing* form after it: *accustom (oneself) to, be accustomed to, face up to, in addition to, look forward to, object to, reduced to, resign oneself to, be resigned to, resort to, sink to, be used to*. Accusative and possessive forms are possible, too:

*I am used to people/him/her **throwing** trash all over the place.*

Some nouns and adjectives can also be followed by *to* + *-ing*: *alternative to, close/closeness to, dedication/dedicated to, opposition/opposed to, similarity/similar to*.

Some verbs can be followed by a *to*-infinitive or by *-ing* forms. These verbs can be followed by both without any change in meaning: *attempt, begin, can't bear, cease, commence, continue, intend, omit, start*.

*I began **reading/to read** the book after the newsreel.*

We do not normally use *-ing* after the progressive forms of *begin, cease, continue, start*. But we can use *-ing* after the progressive form of the verbs which cannot be followed by a *to*-infinitive:

*We were considering **moving** to another town.*

State verbs like *know* and *understand* cannot normally be used with an *-ing* form after *begin, cease, continue*:

*He began **to understand** what was going on.*

We often use a *to*-infinitive after *dread, hate, like, love, prefer* to refer to a specified future event and *-ing* to refer to an activity currently in progress or existing in general:

*I dread **to think** of what has happened ('I dare not try to').*

*I dread **going** to the dentist ('whenever I go I'm terrified').*

The *to*-infinitive and *-ing* forms never mean the same when used after *remember, forget, regret, try, stop, go on*. *Remember, forget, regret* + *to*-infinitive refers to a present or future action:

*I never forget **to post** the letters.*

The same verbs + *-ing* forms refer to the past:

*I remember **telling** him the news last night.*

Try + *to*-infinitive means 'make an effort'. *Try* + *-ing* means experiment.

*Try **to behave** yourself.*

*Try **talking** to her in person.*

Stop + *to*-infinitive refers to purpose.

The *-ing* form that follows *stop* is the object of the verb and means that the action is not performed anymore.

*He stopped in the middle of the road **to light** his cigarette.*

*He stopped **reading** when she came in.*

Go on + *to*-infinitive refers to doing something different. *Go on* + *-ing* means 'continue without interruption'.

*He went on **to talk** about the next issue.*

*He went on **talking** about his love affairs until everybody was bored to death.*

EXERCISES

29. Complete the following sentences with the gerund or the infinitive of the verbs in brackets.

1. The chairperson suggested to the committee that all the money should be devoted to *..supporting..* (support) shelters for old people.
2. Expensive presents are the key to (open) her heart.
3. The president felt committed to (try) to (put) his promises into practice.
4. His becoming a specialist in dermal diseases is nearer to (become) a reality after the course he has attended.
5. Although she is confident on her opinion, she can't swear to (have) seen the whole scene.
6. He got used to (be) thoroughly searched at the Customs due to his Creole complexion.
7. Jane came very close to (win) the first prize in the chess competition.
8. It might be better to (try) to (talk) to your son as man to man.
9. They used to (hate) their noisy neighbours but now they resigned to (put) up with them.
10. Breaking one's word is the most important obstacle to (make) a true friend.

30. Put the verbs in brackets into their correct form.

1. He had to ask the children *...to stop..*(stop) (make) so much noise.
2. They can't consider (emigrate) before (pay) back all their debts.
3. If you can't (recover) with chemical drugs, try (use) homeopathic remedies.
4. I don't want (you, tell) him about (I, arrive) late last night.
5. I can't understand (Jane, crave) for sweets, as she has tried (lose) weight so many times.
6. He's always loved (skate). I'd like (see) (he, compete) in the World Championship.
7. The headmaster let the teachers (go) on a trip with their students.
8. After (get) (like) classical music through (hear) it on CDs, he finished by (collect) old records.
9. Can you manage (finish) (dig) the garden without any help?
10. I saw her (write) a letter to her boyfriend and then heard her (read) it aloud.

31. Complete the following sentences with the verbs from the list in their correct form.

play, give, buy, say, fly, become, drink, be eaten, study, confess, know, take.

1. She is afraid of ..*flying*...so she went there by boat.
2. She walked out of the room without even ...goodbye.
3. My new neighbour spends all the afternoons ...the piano.
4. I went to the bookshop ...the new novel written by John Fowles.
5. She didn't mind ...him a lift to the office.
6. He stopped ...as he didn't want ... addicted.
7. They made him ...everything about the theft.
8. You had better ...hard if you want ...all your exams in the winter session.
9. The steak is not done yet ...
10. I think ...a foreign language makes you richer.

32. Finish the following sentences without changing the meaning of the sentences printed before them.

1. He is too absent-minded to hear what you're saying.
He isn't *attentive enough to hear what you're saying*.
2. He can't remember switching off the light before leaving.
He has
3. It took him five hours to get to that remote village.
He spent
4. Do you intend to go in for the competition?
Are you.....
5. I'm not in the habit of gossiping, so please spare me with all this rumour.
I'm not used.....
6. He was able to solve that difficult problem.
He was
7. It was difficult for them to talk with natives, as they didn't know the language too well.
They had
8. Could you buy me a loaf if you go out?
Would you
9. It isn't worth going there after so much rain.
It's a
10. I don't intend to go there without being told why.
I have.....